

Yesterday in Mekeel's:

The Development of the U.S. Aeroplane Mail

by Arthur T. Browne (From Mekeel's Weekly, Sept. 21-Oct. 5, 1912 with images added)

Although the honor of having the first aeroplane cancellation belongs to Great Britain and German philatelists are delighted with the honor of having the first aeroplane stamp, yet the development of the aeroplane mail has been rapid in this country. At many meets, held all over the country, from New York to California, mail has been carried by the bird-men and as a result, many aeroplane cancellations have appeared. To assemble these aeroplane cancellations is no small stunt. The writer has tried it and knows whereof he speaks. Yet to the collector of cancellations, the result is worth the effort, for these cancellations are very interesting.

In an article on "Aerial Postmarks" which I wrote for this paper March 9, 1912, eight aeroplane cancellations were mentioned. Since then many others have appeared. At present, there are twenty-three aeroplane cancellations to be looked for.

The facts about the aviation meets, the aviators and the aeroplane cancellations are as follows:

No. 1-Garden City Estates, N.Y.

The first United States aeroplane cancellation was used at the International Aviation Meet, which was held on the Nassau Boulevard, Long Island, N.Y., Sept. 23 to October 1, 1911. This cancellation



September 24 Pioneer flight card, Garden City Estates to Germany, with red Hannover arrival postmark, stamp tied by Sep. 24 flight cachet, also with straight-line "Aerial Special Despatch".

was the result of the interest taken by Postmaster General Hitchcock in the success of the First British Flying Mail, he arranging with the promoters of the above mentioned meet for the carrying of mail. The first aviator to carry mail was Earl F. Ovington, who won the great Boston-Nashua-Worcester-Providence-Boston race at the Squantum Aviation Field, Labor Day, 1911. Mail was carried from the special post office on the field to the regular post office at Mineola, N.Y. Some eighteen or twenty letter boxes were placed about the field and the mail was collected by a regular carrier attached to the Brooklyn postoffice.

On the second day of the meet, 6,165 cards, 781 letters and 85 papers were carried by aviator Ovington. The count of mail carried the first day was unfortunately lost.

The letters and postal cards were cancelled in black ink. The postmark was circular in shape. At the top, were the words "Aeroplane Station No. 1." In the center, was the date. At the bottom, were the words "Garden City Estates, N.Y." The cancellation consisted of four wide, black lines, one-eighth of an inch in thickness. At the left of the postmark, in large letters, was stamped "Aerial Special Despatch."

No.2-St. Louis, Mo.

Three days later, the second aeroplane cancellation made its

appearance. It came from St. Louis, Mo., from an aviation meet held at Kinloch Field and Fairground Park, October 4 to October 9, 1911.

Aviator Walter Brookins, flying a Wright Biplane, carried mail for a distance of twelve miles, the greatest distance that mail had ever been carried in this country. So great was the demand for aeroplane cancellations by the St. Louis collectors that Brookins' flights were soon restricted to the length of the field in order that he might keep up with the mail collections. On his first flight, Brookins carried 6,000 pieces of mail matter. Stations were established at each end of the field and mail was collected every forty-five minutes.

The letters and postal cards were cancelled in black ink. The postmark was circular in shape: At the top were the words "Aeroplane Station No.1." In the center was the date. At the bottom, were the words "St. Louis, Mo. Aviation Field." The cancellation consisted of four wide, black lines, one-eighth of an inch in thickness.

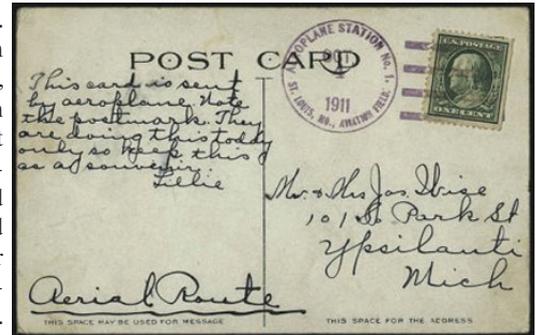
Experimental Flight.

On October 8, at St. Louis, Mo., aviator Hugh Robinson, in a hydro-aeroplane made a spectacular flight on the Mississippi river starting from the river five times and alighting six times. He carried mail from Missouri into Illinois. This was an experimental trip and no aeroplane cancellations have made an appearance as having been used on this trip.

No.3-Rochester, N.Y.

On October 21, 1911, at Rochester, N.Y. the third aeroplane cancellation came to light when aviator Lincoln Beachey, probably the most daring aviator in the game today, gave an exhibition flight and carried mail at Crittenden Park. This park is used as a race track. Beachey made two flights, and as the meet lasted but one day, naturally the Rochester "aero" cancellation is a hard one to get hold of.

The postmark was circular in shape. At the top were the words "Aeroplane Station No. 1." In the center was the date, "Oct. 21 1911."

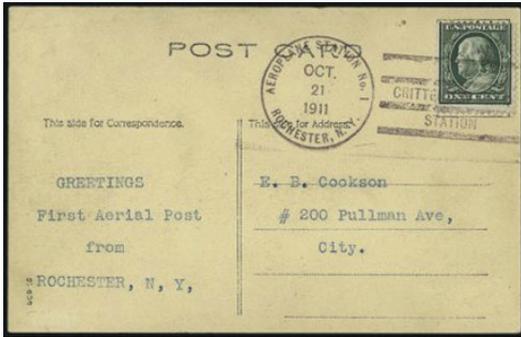


Oct. 4, 1911, St. Louis Mo. Aviation Meet



The author was not aware of this picture post card with a "Hydro-Aeroplane Mail Service" cancel, dated October 7, 1911.

At the bottom were the words "Rochester, N.Y." The cancellation consisted of four long, wide lines, about two inches in length and one-eighth of an inch in thickness. The cancellation



Post card with October 21, 1911, Rochester, N.Y. Aeroplane Station No. 1 cancellation, also with "Greetings First Aerial Post from Rochester, N.Y."

lines in the first two aeroplane cancellations were one inch in length. In the center of the cancellation were the words "Crittenden Park Station." Beachey carried mail from the park, which is just outside of the Rochester city limits, to a point within the city, about a mile from the starting point. Here the mail was carried by automobiles to the main postoffice where it was distributed.

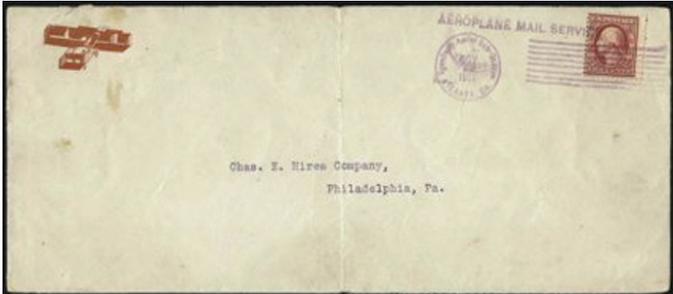
No. 4-Fort Smith, Ark

The fourth aeroplane cancellation came from Fort Smith, Arkansas and was in use but one day, November 6, 1911. This is another "hard-to-get" "aero". Aviators Lincoln Beachey and



Fort Smith Ark. League Park Aviation Meet five-line flight cancel on small envelope with 2¢ Hudson-Fulton tied by the cancel.

Beckwith Havens gave a demonstration in a hydro-aeroplane starting from the aviation field, outside of the town, to the main postoffice, in the town, a distance of about five miles. This aeroplane cancellation was much different from the others. The letters and postal cards were cancelled with six heavy horizontal lines. At the left of the cancellation in five horizontal lines, were the words "Aeroplane Mail Service, League Park Station, Fort Smith, Ark., November 6, 1911."



There are a few cancels of which the author apparently was unaware. We will add them in proper chronological order, without changing the author's numbers. This cover shows a November 18 Aeroplane Mail Service cancel for the Nov. 16-18, Atlanta Ga. Atlanta Speedway Aviation Meet, with a printed early biplane corner card in orange red. The American Air Mail Catalog notes that while 3,500 pieces of mail were flown during the three days, very few are known today.

No.5-Savannah, Ga.

The fifth aeroplane cancellation came from an aviation meet held at the Athletic Park, Savannah, Ga., November 25 to November 29, 1911. The aviator was Beckwith Havens. Although the meet lasted five days, mail was carried but two days, November 25 and November 28. Havens carried mail from a special postoffice on the field to Waters Road, where he dropped it. The distance was about three-quarters of a mile. After the mail had been dropped, it was taken in an automobile to the postoffice, about two miles beyond. Both the aeroplane postmark and cancellation were in blue ink. The postmark consisted of a double circle at the top of which were the words "Aerial Sub Station". In the center were the words "Athletic Park" and the date. At the bottom were the words "Savannah, Ga."

The cancellation consisted of six thin lines, about two and one-half inches in length. At the top over the lines, in medium sized type, were the words "Aeroplane Mail Service."



Postcards with 1¢ green tied by Nov. 25 flight cancel for the Nov. 25-28, Savannah Ga. Athletic Park Aviation Meet.

No.6-Columbus, Ga.

The sixth aeroplane cancellation also comes from the State of Georgia and was used at a meet held at the Columbus Driving Park, Columbus, Ga., December 12 and 13, 1911. The mail was carried by aviators Godet and Walsh in a Curtiss machine. The mail was taken up from the park and after a wide circle of about two miles had been made, was dropped at a spot outside the grounds, where it was picked up and carried in an automobile to the postoffice. Both the postmark and cancellation were in bright reddish purple ink. The postmark was circular in shape, much smaller than others previously used. At the top, were the words "Aerial Sub Station." In the center, were the words, "Driving Park" and the date. At the bottom were the words "Columbus, Ga." The cancellation consisted of eight long thin lines each two and one half inches in length. Over the lines in medium sized type were the words "Aeroplane Mail Service." Excepting the size of the postmark circle, this cancellation was very much like that used at Savannah.



Post card with stamp tied by the December 12 Aerial Sub-Station Columbus, Ga. cancel.

No.7-Wilmington, N. C.

The seventh aeroplane cancellation also comes from the South, being used at a meet held at Highwood Park, Wilmington, N. C., January 1 and 2, 1912. Aviator Walter Brookins, the daring Wright biplane operator, who also carried mail at the St. Louis meet, was the aerial

mailman. Although the meet was held two days mail was only carried on the first day, a fact that makes this "aero" one of the hard-to-get variety. Brookins carried the mail from the field to a cross road, about three miles distant, where he dropped it. It was taken in an automobile to the postoffice. The mail was dropped from a height of about 500 feet. Both the postmark and cancellation were in black ink. The postmark was circular in shape and was like those of Savannah and Columbus, Ga. At the top were the words "Aerial Sub Station." In the center were the words "Highwood Park" and the date. At the bottom, were the words "Wilmington, N.C."

The cancellation consisted of eight lines, one and 5-16 inches in length and 1-16 of an inch in thickness. The words "Aeroplane Mail Service" in large black letters, were printed over the lines and across the stamp or postal card.



1¢ McKinley postal card canceled by "Aerial Sub-Station, Highwood, Washington D.C., Jan 1, 1912, Aeroplane Mail Service" postmark, less than 10 usages known. The author was not aware that mail for this flight that was to be flown on January 1st, was postponed to the next day due to very bad weather on January 1.

No.8-Los Angeles, Cal.

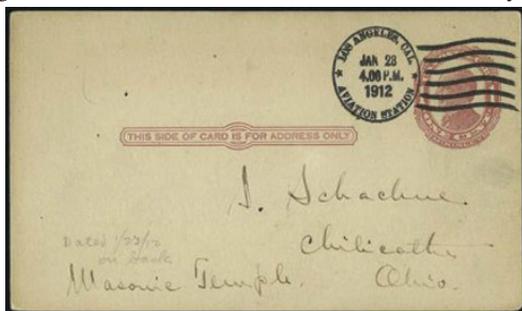
The eighth aeroplane cancellation comes from California, it being the first to come from that state. This cancellation of which there are three distinct types, was used at a meet held at Dominguez Field, Los Angeles, Cal., January 20 to 28, 1912. The first bird-man to carry mail was Glenn Martin. All of the three types of cancellations used at this meet were in black ink. The types were as follows:

Type 1-Postmark, almost oval shaped, and small. At the top were the words, "Los Angeles, Cal." In the center was the date. At the bottom, were the words, "Aviation Station." At the sides of the postmark was a small star. The cancellation consisted of five wavy lines in the center of which were the words "Aviation Field." The type used in the postmark and the cancellation was small.

Type 2-Same as above, except that the cancellation consisted of six wavy lines, with no printing between them.

Type 3-Postmark was a large circle. At the top, were the words "Aeroplane Station." In the center was the date. At the bottom were the words "Los Angeles, Cal." The cancellation consisted of four heavy lines, one-eighth of an inch wide. Printed on the second and third lines were the words "Dominguez Field."

On some of the specimens that I have obtained, at the left is



1¢ postal card with Jan. 28 Type 2 flight cancels. Although it is faded and not visible in this photo, this card does bear the four-line message at the left referred to by the author.

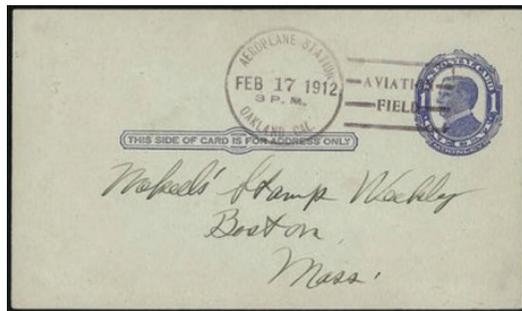
printed, in reddish purple ink "This piece of mail was carried from Aviation Field Postal Station to nearest regular Postoffice at Compton, California."

No.9-Oakland, Cal.

The ninth aeroplane cancellation is Track, Emeryville, Cal. A small town meet was held at the Emeryville Race Track, Emeryville, Cal; a small town which is bounded on three sides by the city of Oakland. The aviation meet was held February 17 to February 25, 1912. Farnham Fish, the boy aviator, was the aerial mail carrier. The mail service was in use during the entire nine days of the meet. The mail was carried from the special postoffice on the field to the main postoffice, 17th street and Broadway, Oakland, a distance of about 2-1/2 miles. The aeroplane cancellation used at this meet was different from all others previously used. The cancellation was in black ink and consisted of four medium wide lines, the top and bottom lines being one inch in length. The second and third lines were broken and in the center of the broken lines were the words "Aviation Field."

The postmark was circular in shape. At the top, were the words "Aeroplane Station."

In the center was the date. At the bottom were the words "Oakland, Cal."



1¢ blue McKinley postal card with Feb. 17, Oakland Cal. Emeryville Race Track Aviation Meet cancel

No. 10-Sacramento, Cal.

The tenth aeroplane cancellation comes from Sacramento, Cal., making the third to come from the State of California. An aviation meet was held there Saturday and Sunday, March 2 and 3, 1912. Aviator Phil Parmalee, who was later killed, was the bird-man who carried the mail. From a special postoffice on the aviation field, mail was carried to Oak Park, a suburb of Sacramento. Both the postmark and the cancellation were in black ink.

The postmark was a double circle. At the top, were the words "Aviation Station." In the center was the date. At the bottom were the words

"Sacramento, Cal." The cancellation was similar to that used at the Oakland meet. It consisted of four wide black lines, 1-3-16 inches in length. The second and third lines were broken, and in the center space thus made were the words "Aviation Field."



1¢ green tied to photo post card by bold Mar. 3 Sacramento Cal. Agricultural Park Aviation Meet flight cancel with 1¢ Postage Due with blue crayon "precancel"

To be continued

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No. 11-Baton Rouge, La.

The eleventh aeroplane cancellation comes from the State of Louisiana. An aviation meet was held at the State University Athletic Field, New Orleans, April 10, 1912. Aviator George Mestache made a flight from the field to Baton Rouge, La, a



A post card carried on the April 10, 1912 New Orleans-Baton Rouge and Return, City to City Experimental Flight with 1¢ green stamp tied by "New Orleans La. Apr. 10 3:30PM 1912" duplex cancel and magenta hand stamp cachet.

distance of 90 miles, the longest flight ever made, carrying mail. Upon making a landing at Baton Rouge, Mestache damaged his aeroplane and the meet, which was scheduled for the following day, was off.

If Mestache had alighted safely, he was to have made a flight from Baton Rouge to New Orleans. Had this been done, New Orleans would have had an aeroplane cancellation, as it was planned to have Mestache carry mail on his return flight.

The aeroplane cancellation was in blue ink and was quite novel. It consisted of a flag design, with four stars in the upper right hand corner, in a small square; four stripes at the top and three stripes at the bottom of the flag. In the center of the flag were the words "U. S. Aerial Mail Service." The regular Baton Rouge postmark was also used as well as the wavy-lines flag cancellation which is in use at present.

No. 12-Altoona, Pa.

The twelfth aeroplane cancellation comes from the State of Pennsylvania, and was used at an aviation meet held at Altoona, Pa., Saturday afternoon, May 18, 1912.



Post card with 1¢ green tied by "Aerial Post Office May 18 1912 Altoona, Pa. handstamp.

Aviator

Walter Brookins for the third time one of the Wright flyers was an aerial mail carrier. Both the postmark and the cancellation were in reddish purple ink. The postmark was circular in shape. At the top were the words "Aerial Post Office No. 1." In the center was the date and at the bottom were the words "Altoona, Pa." Two small stars were at

the sides of the postmark. The cancellation consisted of seven wavy lines and was joined to the right side of the postmark.

N.H. Almost Gets One.

New Hampshire came very near having an aeroplane cancellation to add to the list, on May 30, 1912. At the automobile races held at Rockingham Park, Salem Depot, N.H., aviator Lincoln Beachey, the most daring of all the manbirds was scheduled to make a flight from the park of Lawrence, Mass. No special aeroplane cancellation was provided by the post office authorities but the promoters of the races put on sale souvenir postal cards with an aeroplane cancellation printed or stamped upon them. The weather was stormy, Beachey made a few trips in the air, but no mail was carried. The automobile races were postponed until Saturday June 8 but no aviation features were provided, as Beachey was engaged elsewhere.

No. 13-Cicero, Ill.

One of the hardest aeroplane cancellations to get hold of is that of Cicero, Ill., which is number thirteen on the list. Maybe the number has something to do with the difficulty I had in obtaining a specimen;



1¢ green tied by "Cicero Ill. May 31 1912 4-30P" waving flag machine cancel on postcard, also with greenish blue straightline "Aerial Mail" cachet (diagonal, to left of stamp).

maybe not. Under the auspices of the Aero Club of Illinois a meet was held at the Cicero Flying Field, which is owned by the club, May 30-June 2, 1912. The aviators who carried mail were Max Lillie, Marcel Tournier, Paul Studensky and George Mestach.

The aviation cancellation was very simple; it consisted of the words "Via Aeroplane" which was stamped on the letters and postal cards together with the regular Cicero, Ill., postmark. [Note, per the image above, the handstamp read "Aerial Mail. JFD."] Mail carrying on a large scale was in use at this meet. On the first day, aviator Lillie flew from the field to the Elmhurst Golf Club, a distance of 18 miles and aviator Mestach made a flight to "Wheaton, Ill., a distance of 24 miles. On the second day, aviator Studensky made a flight to the Elmhurst Golf club and aviator Lillie flew to Wheaton. The third day's program consisted of a flight by Studensky to Elmhurst Golf club and another by Mestach to Wheaton. On the fourth day, Studensky flew to the Elmhurst Golf club and Lillie made the last mail-carrying trip, to Wheaton. The total mail carried weighed 458 pounds, including sacks. The greatest amount carried by an aviator was 81 pounds, Lillie being the aviator.

None From Wisconsin.

It took me quite a little time and considerable letter writing to find out that no aeroplane cancellations were used in either Milwaukee or Watertown, Wis. Aviator Farnham Fish made a flight from Cicero, Ill.,

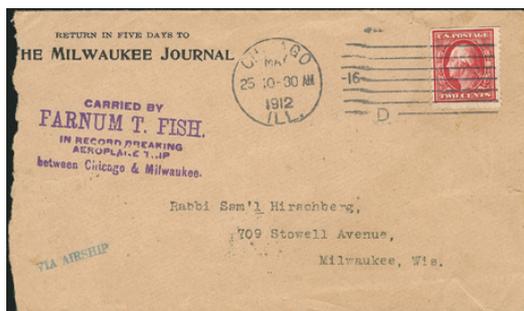
to Milwaukee the latter part of May, 1912. On this trip, an 85 mile flight, he carried some merchandise from a Chicago concern. From Milwaukee, he flew to Watertown, Wis., a distance of about 45 miles. On this trip Fish carried bundles of the Milwaukee Journal and dropped them at various towns along the route. He also carried a few postal cards and letters that were handed him by people in the crowd that had assembled before he started. Both the postmasters at Milwaukee and Watertown have written me that the postoffice had no official connection with the flights made by Fish and that 110 aeroplane cancellations were used. The Milwaukee Journal made great preparations for Fish's trip with their papers getting out an "Aeroplane Edition."

No. 14-Saugus, Mass.

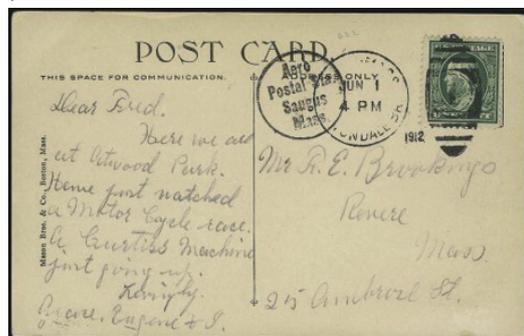
At last, Massachusetts appears on the scene with an aeroplane cancellation, and, incidentally, for the first time, New England. At a meet held at Atwood Park, Cliftondale, a suburb of Saugus, May 30, 31 and June 1, 1912, this "aero" appeared. On the first day, aviator Harry Atwood, famous as an aerial joyrider, carried mail from the park, which, by the way was named for him, to Lynn. Atwood's flight was made shortly before seven o'clock in the evening and he carried 800 pieces of mail, 500 postal cards and 300 letters. The distance was about four miles and the time consumed was about twelve minutes.

It rained hard the second day, but on the third day, aviator Arch Freeman made a successful flight with mail. Freeman swooped wide over the water and made for the Lynn boulevard. He misjudged the distance, however, and dropped the sack into the ocean, where it was fished out by carriers from the Lynn postoffice and taken in an automobile to the postoffice.

The aeroplane postmark was a small circle in which was printed in heavy black type, medium sized, "Aero Postal Sta. Saugus Mass." The regular Lynn, Mass., Cliftondale Branch, postmark was also stamped on the letters and postal cards as well as a "dauber" cancel-



Buff cover with printed Milwaukee Journal corner card and 2¢ stamp tied by "Chicago Ill. May 25 10:30AM 1912" machine cancel, carried on the May 25, 1912, Chicago Ill. Cicero Field-Milwaukee Wis. Record Over-Water Flight. According to the American Air Mail Catalog, this is one of only three known covers from the flight, the other two being in museums.



Post card with 1¢ green tied by "Lynn, Mass. Cliftondale Br. Jun. 1, 1912 4PM" duplex cancel on flown pioneer flight postcard to Revere Mass., also with well-struck "Aero Postal Sta. Saugus Mass." circular handstamp cachet.

lation, elliptical in shape and in the center of which was the figure "1". I have a postal card which, in addition to the above mentioned cancellations has the Lynn, Mass., West Lynn Sta. postmarked upon it. This may be called type 2.

No. 15-Lexington, Ky.

The fifteenth aeroplane cancellation is credited to Lexington, Ky., but in fact was never used. At a meet held at the Lexington Race Track June 3-9, 1912, aviators Eugene Heth, Paul Peck, whom I will



Post card to San Antonio, Texas, with 1¢ green tied by "Lexington Ky. Jun. 13" machine cancel. No mail from this meet was ever flown. The postmaster waited until June 13 before sending it by train.

mention later, Oscar Brindley and Leonard Bonney made flights. The aero mail service was not handled by the government; the cancellation was supplied by the Mercural Aeroplane and Entertainment Company of New York City. High winds prevailed throughout this meet and no flights with mail were even attempted. It had been planned to have mail carried from Lexington to Winchester, Ky., a distance of between 18 and 20 miles. Like the Salem, N. H., meet that I have mentioned in a previous chapter, this "aero" is in the "almost" class.

A brother newspaperman in the South, to whom I wrote for information concerning this meet, answered my letter as follows: "Nothin' doin'. No mail carried. Wind blowin' pretty strong and guy got cold feet." The cancellation, if such it may be called, consisted of three lines of type, in red ink. The cancellation read "U.S. Official Aerial Mail Stamp". The regular Lexington, Ky., postmark and the way-lines cancellation was also used.

No. 16-Squantum, Mass.

Another "almost" aeroplane cancellation hails from a meet at the Squantum, Mass., field June 29-July 7, 1912. Letters and postal cards were stamped with a special cancellation in black ink and read "Boston Aviation Meet--Aero Mail Service."



Flight cover with 2¢ tied by "Boston Aviation Meet Aero Mail Service" cachet and Atlantic, Mass July 3 postmark. Mail was to be flown on each day of the meet from Hartford Aviation Field, served by the Squantum post office, via Atlantic, Quincy, Milton and East Milton to New York City. Harriet Quimby was designated mail carrier, but due to financial disputes, she refused to fly the mail.

There were two postmarks used. One read Atlantic, Mass., and the other Boston, Mass. The aviators did more flying around for their money than they did in the air. No mail was carried and after a day or two, the field postoffice was discontinued.

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No. 17-South Amboy, N. J.

Just for a change, I will describe a real aeroplane cancellation. This was used but one day, July 4, 1912 and was, incidentally, the second cancellation to appear in which mail was carried by a hydro-aeroplane. Aviator Oliver G. Simmons in a Burgess-

Wright hydroaeroplane started from the Raritan river at South Amboy, N. J., about noon. He had with him a letter from the South Amboy Business Men's Association which was addressed to a New York newspaper. Simmons arose from the river and made a two mile flight to Perth Amboy, N.J. He reached the latter place in just three minutes. He dropped the mail sack, which was picked up by a Perth Amboy carrier and sent through the regular mail channels to New York. Then Simmons hustled back to his hydro cradle on the South Amboy side of the river. The aeroplane cancellation was novel. It consisted of two lines of large type, the ink being reddish purple. The cancellation read "Aero Plane Route No. 900006." The regular South Amboy, N. J., postmark and a "dauber" cancellation were also used.

No. 18-Hamilton, Ohio.

The State of Ohio brought out the eighteenth aeroplane cancellation which was used at the Butler County-Fairgrounds, Hamilton, Ohio, July 12 and 13, 1912. The Hamilton Retail Merchant's asso-



1¢ green tied by South Amboy N.J. Jul. 4, 1912 grid duplex circular datestamp on Tuck's Educational picture postcard showing the "Voisin" biplane, also with purple two-line flight cachet and additional printed three-line cachet in black at bottom, for the July 4, 1912 South Amboy-Perth Amboy N.J. Experimental Hydroplane Flight.

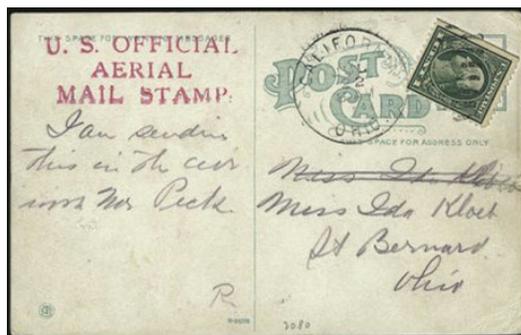


2¢ carmine tied by July 13 three-line "Aeromail Service July 13, 1912 Hamilton Ohio" flight cachet on cover to Boston, cancelled two days later by Boston Jul. 15, 1912 waving flag machine cancel and forwarded to Beverly Mass., for July 12-13, 1912 Hamilton, Ohio Butler County Fair Aviation Meet.

ciation secured aviators Lincoln Beachey and Charles F. Walsh and both made flights carrying mail. This was the third time that Beachey had played the aerial mail man and the second time for Walsh. From a special postoffice on the field the mail was carried to the Krebs Ball Park, a short distance, where it was dropped in front of the grand stand. One of Uncle Sam's rural carriers then took charge of the sack. On the trip made by Beachey 18,000 pieces of mail were carried. Both the aeroplane postmark and cancellation were in black ink. The postmark consisted of three lines of medium sized type and read "Aero Mail Service, July 13, 1912, Hamilton, Ohio." The cancellation consisted of six heavy lines, about one-eighth of an inch in thickness and an inch and a quarter in length.

No. 19-Coney Island, Ohio.

The nineteenth aeroplane cancellation was used at Coney Island, Ohio, July 19, 20 and 21, 1912, being the second "aero" for Ohio. Coney Island is a summer resort, ten miles up the Ohio river in the village of California, Ohio, and was



1¢ green tied by "California Ohio Jul. 22 8 AM" oval grid duplex circular datestamp, also with three-line red flight cachet at left on souvenir postcard illustrating aviator Paul Peck (the first official Air Mail carrier), for the July 19-22, 1912, Coney Island (Cincinnati), Ohio. Flying exhibition.

recently annexed to the City of Cincinnati. Aviator Paul Peck, operator of a Columbia monoplane, carried mail from Coney Island to California, a distance of one mile. There is no postoffice at Coney Island, but a special postoffice was established on the grounds and a charge of ten cents was made for the carrying of the aeroplane mail. The aeroplane cancellation was exactly like the one used at Lexington, Ky. It consisted of three lines of large type reading "U.S. Official Aerial Mail Stamp" and was in red ink. The regular California, Ohio postmark and a "dauber" cancellation in black were also used.

No. 20-Hohokus, N. J.

The twentieth aeroplane cancellation comes from New Jersey, being the second for that state. On Saturday, August 3, 1912, an exhibition was held at Hohokus, N.J., by the Cressier Aviation company. From a special postoffice on the field, mail was carried to Ridgewood, N.J., a distance of about two miles.

The meet came near being a failure. About 7000 people were patiently waiting for aviator Durafour, who operates a Morane-Borel passenger carrying monoplane. He did not show up and Joseph Richter, a young aviator who had been doing stunts in the air to amuse the crowd, volunteered to carry the mail. His welcome



1¢ green tied by beautifully struck flight cachet and bars, also with Aug. 5 Hohokus receiving circular datestamp on souvenir postcard illustrating Glenn Curtis, his biplane and crew, for Aug. 3, 1912, Hohokus-Ridgewood N.J. Hohokus Driving Park Aviation Meet.

offer was accepted and Richter started off with the mail. He lost his bearings in the air and at one time was as far north as Suffern, N.Y. Not daunted a bit, the young aviator insisted upon making another attempt. This time he dropped the sack of mail near the Ridgewood depot, where a large bonfire had been built to guide the youthful bird-man.

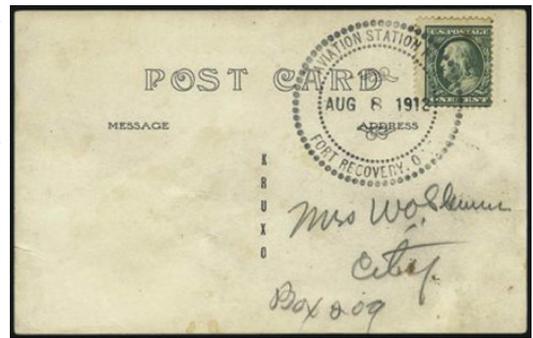
Both the aeroplane postmark and cancellation were in black ink. The postmark and cancellation both were similar to those used at the Garden City Estates, N.Y., and the St. Louis, Mo., meets. The postmark was circular in shape. At the top were the words "Aerial Special Despatch". In the center was the date. At the bottom were the words "Aviation Grounds, Hohokus, N.J." The cancellation consisted of four wide lines, one-eighth of an inch in thickness and one inch in length.

No. 21-Fort Recovery, Ohio.

The twenty-first aeroplane, and the third for the State of Ohio came from Fort Recovery, Ohio, and was used at the Harvest Jubilee held there August 6, 7, 8 and 9, 1912. Aviator Earl Sandt, known as the "Boy Wonder", carried the mail. Although the Harvest Festival lasted four days, mail was carried only two days, August 8 and 9. On the first day, aviator George Schmitt broke his machine while alighting. Mail carrying was scheduled for this date but the letters and postal cards which had been cancelled with the special aeroplane cancellation on the field were carried to the postoffice by one of the clerks at the special field post-office. No mail carrying occurred on the second day as a new machine which arrived could not be ready for a flight and had to be overhauled. There were no flights made on the second day. On the third day, mail was carried by aviator Sandt. The "Boy Wonder"

arose until he was a mere speck in the clouds. He tried to drop the sack of mail in a pasture lot but was unsuccessful and the sack landed on the top of a wood pile in the St. Clair Mill's wood yard, about a half a mile from the grounds. The festival was extended one day when Sandt again carried mail. The aeroplane cancellation is one of the most interesting that has yet appeared. It consisted of a large circle with a smaller circle within, both composed of dots. The larger circle was composed of large dots and the smaller circle of small dots, all in black ink.

In the space between the circles at the top were the words "Aviation Station No. 1." In the center was the date. Above and below



1¢ green tied by large Aug. 8 double-circle flight cachet on souvenir postcard featuring biplane for Aug. 6-8, 1912, Fort Recovery O. Harvest Festival Aviation Meet.

the date were ornaments. At the bottom between the circles, were the words "Fort Recovery, Ohio." The postmark served both as postmark and cancellation.

To be continued

Yesterday in Mekeel's:

From Mekeel's Weekly, February 25, 1905



DEAR BILL:

I received the box of stamps all O. K. Guess it will pan out all right, as I just sold a hundred 2c 1869 out of it to a dealer for \$5.00 William, do you know that charity is a paying virtue? I will give you an example. The other day a small boy came into the office with a little tobacco box full of stamps. He asked me what I would give for them and I said five cents, as they appeared to be common truck for which I had no real use at all. He said he expected a quarter and looked so disappointed that my heart softened and I gave him the coin from pure kindness, thinking that I was stuck about 15c. After he had gone I was carelessly running through the stuff when my eye lit on a nice copy of a 24c 1870. It was the only good stamp in the bunch, but I knew I was ahead on my purchase at that. I picked it out and turned it over, to see if the back was in as good condition as the front, when I experienced one of the most pleasant thrills I have had since I entered the stamp business. There was a grille on the back, which makes that particular stamp worth about \$40.00 in the open market. Of course you don't know what a grille is and I wont take time to explain in detail, but it's a good thing to find on 24c 1870's, as you will probably realize from the above figures. I stuck it in a little card in my 2x4 show case and pretty soon Charlie Tompkins drifted in and I sprung it on him. He was immediately lost in admiration while I carried on a silent struggle with my conscience as to how much I should soak him. Charlie is so easy that I almost feel ashamed sometimes after parting him from his coin. After spending about five minutes in rapturous examination, he asked what I would take for it. I was about to say \$60.00, but at the last moment my better side asserted itself and I told him I would take fifty-eight, although it meant a great sacrifice. He thanked me kindly and paid over the price without a stutter. It's nice to do business with a fellow like that, who goes broke for your benefit every day and shows up with a fresh roll the next, with no questions asked. Some cranks would have insisted on having that grille examined and a three-man guarantee written on the back and then would have made a mighty holler if you had asked them to pay \$35.00 for the stamp. Would that the stamp world contained more fat boys a la Charlie Tompkins. The stamp business in general is not any too rushing just now, but I am getting close to the real spenders and manage to keep going all right.

JIM.

P. S. That fellow that landed so hard on me when I first hit town is coming over to the office tomorrow. I have clipped the perforations off a few first issue revenues and stuck them into your dad's old album and will get back at him plenty if I have half a chance.

Yesterday in Mekeel's:

The Development of the U.S. Aeroplane Mail

by Arthur T. Browne (From Mekeel's Weekly, Sept. 21-Oct. 5, 1912 with images added)

(This is the final installment in this series from the 1912 Mekeel's Weekly, in which the author provided information on the first aeroplane cancellations, in chronological order.)

No. 22-Ocean City and Stone Harbor, N. J.

New Jersey gets the twenty-second aeroplane, being the third for that state. It was used at a meet held August 8-13, 1912, at Ocean City, N.J. The aviator was Marshall Earl Reid. Mail

was carried from Ocean City to Stone Harbor over the ocean, a distance of about twenty miles. Ordinarily, the mail between these places goes in a roundabout way. On his first flight, Reid not only carried mail, but he also carried a passenger. On his return from Stone Harbor, Reid also carried mail. The aeroplane postmark was therefore a combination of both places, yet it was applied at Ocean City only. On four trips from Ocean City to Stone Harbor, Reid carried 11,456 pieces of mail and on three trips from Stone Harbor to Ocean City he carried 1059 pieces of mail, a total of 12,515 pieces. On his last trip, which was made to Stone Harbor, he carried between 5,000 and 7,000 pieces of mail.

Purple ink was used for the postmark which consisted of two lines of medium sized type reading "Ocean City & Stone Harbor Aerial U. S. Mail Service." The cancellation was in black and consisted of six thin lines, two and three-quarters inches in length. The lines were grouped so as to make three sets of parallel lines.

No. 23-Portland, Oregon.

The twenty-third aeroplane cancellation comes from the far northwest and was used at Portland, Oregon and the aviator was Walter Edwards. The meet was held at the Country Club racetrack, a distance of several miles

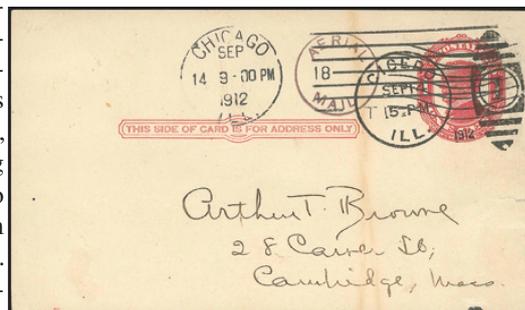


1¢ green tied by Ocean City August 10 machine cancel and violet two-line flight cachet. According to the American Air Mail Catalog, some of the mail received the handstamp cachet while others have handwritten inscriptions.

from the center of the city, on August 10 and 11, 1912. He carried about 2500 letters and postal cards from Portland, Oregon to Vancouver, Washington, about ten miles and over the Columbia River. Among the mail carried was letters to President Taft, Woodrow Wilson, Col. Roosevelt, Postmaster General Hitchcock and a letter from the mayor of Portland to the mayor of Vancouver. The aeroplane cancellation was in black ink and consisted of the regular Portland, Oregon; postmark with the word "Aviation" at the top and the word "Station" below it. The lettering was in medium sized type. A "dauber" cancellation, elliptical in shape and in the center of which was the figure "1" was also used. At the left of the letters and postal cards, in purple ink, was printed "U. S. Aeroplane Mail Service. This letter carried by aviator Waiter Edwards From Portland, Oregon to Vancouver, Wash." The words "U. S. Aeroplane Mail Service" were in larger type than the rest of the lettering which was in very small type.

No. 24-Cicero, Ill.

The twenty-fourth aeroplane cancellation comes from Cicero, Ill., being the second to come from that place. Under the direction of the Aero Club of Illinois a meet was held at the



Chicago and Cicero September 14 and "Aerial Mail" cancels on 1¢ red Postal Card (Sc. UX24) to Cambridge Mass.

Cicero Field, September 12, 13 and 14, 1912. The aerial mail carriers were aviators Lillie, Thompson, Vought and Prince. All Aurora, Ill., mail delivered at the Cicero postoffice was carried by aeroplane instead of train. The distance was 27 miles. The cancellation was in black and consisted of a small circle at the top and bottom of which, respectively were the words "Aerial Mail" in medium sized type. This was cancelled with seven parallel lines, two inches in length. The fourth line was shorter than the rest, to the extent of a quarter of an inch. The postal cards and letters present a very much cancelled appearance. In addition to the above mentioned cancellations, there were the "Wavy Lines" flag cancellation, a Cicero, Ill., and a Chicago, Ill., postmark. Another type included an elliptical shaped "Dauber" cancellation in the center of which was the figure "1."

This is the closing word of the series. The compilation has been no easy task. To United States postmasters, brother newspapermen and friendly philatelists all over the country, I extend my heartfelt thanks for their kindness in helping me not only with information, but in many cases, with specimens of the various aeroplane cancellations.



1¢ green tied by Portland Oregon August 11 "Aviation Station" cancel and purple flight cachet.